

13 June 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Informal Joint Event of the Economic and Social Council and
the Peacebuilding Commission on Promoting Durable Peace and
Sustainable Development in Sudan and South Sudan**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This joint event of the ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission is timely and relevant. I am grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to share a few observations with you on peace and development in Sudan and South Sudan. I therefore thank you very much for your invitation.

The United Nations has a long-standing commitment to Sudan. Its presence in the country dates back to the 1950s, with support in the form of development assistance, humanitarian assistance, stabilisation, security and human rights, as well as support for the implementation of the peace agreement. I take this opportunity to thank the Member States and the UN staff on the ground for their engagement in the country.

The United Nations is eager to continue its close and long-term partnership with Sudan and to assist South Sudan in its effort for nation- and institution-building and for long-term sustainable development.

Indeed, the United Nations and the international community face a historic moment: in a few weeks, a new State will formally declare its independence and will become a Member of the United Nations. This is a remarkable achievement, and we must spare no effort to ensure that this process is a success. This is critical, not only for the history of Sudan and of its people, but for the entire region and the continent. Destabilisation would have far-reaching repercussions.

The situation in Southern Kordofan state and in Abyei is concerning. Civilians are caught between the North's Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the South's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Civilian casualties and massive displacement of people are reported. The provision of humanitarian assistance must be secured. Hostilities must cease and an agreement must be reached urgently. There is no time to lose: military action risks creating an irreversible deadlock, maintaining a climate of unresolved tensions that can be revived at any time.

A solution on Abyei and popular consultations in the Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states are vital for the development of peaceful North-South relations. Sudan and South Sudan's best interest is in cooperating and living in harmony. The United Nations is ready to contribute to support the implementation of these critical aspects for the peace process.

However, the main responsibility rests with the leaders of Sudan and South Sudan. They are responsible to protect civilian populations. They must reach agreements that will provide the foundation for peace and security in the two States and in the region as a whole. It is essential that the leaders of both sides demonstrate the political will and the flexibility necessary to find solutions to these issues and agree on mechanisms for their implementation.

Peace will only be sustainable if it based on mutual interests and good-neighbourly relations. Durable peace is essential for institution-building and for successful development. Independence carries with it enormous responsibility. Those assuming political responsibilities in South Sudan must do their part to address the huge challenges of being an independent state.

I call on the international community to continue to support both Sudan and South Sudan, in particular to intensify efforts to improve the provision of basic services, to foster agriculture and food security, to promote democratic governance, and enhance capacity-building. The ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission will be instrumental in so doing. It is important that their activities be well articulated, that synergies be exploited and the duplication of their mandates avoided.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My wish is that hostilities in the disputed areas stop immediately and that a negotiated agreement that will bring durable peace in the region can be found rapidly.

I stand ready to support South Sudan in its endeavour to become the world's youngest nation. In particular, the process of becoming a new member of the United Nations will proceed swiftly in the General Assembly upon receipt of the recommendation of the Security Council.